Letter from Taizé

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During his next visit to France Pope John Paul II will visit Taizé on Sunday, October 5th.

Towards the Intercontinental Meetings of Summer 1987

Property of Graduate Theological Union

APR 1 1986

We are already starting to prepare ourselves for the ıtercontinental meetings which will take place in Taizé ımmer 1987. The MADRAS MEETING launched this reparation. The young people who took part there have eturned to their forty-five different countries. Several xts will now help to continue on the way: the "Letter from Madras", the "Letter to a little community", the "Letter to children and those who know how to listen to them", and also the six questions submitted to the United Nations. The EUROPEAN MEETING IN BARCELONA, straight after, with participants from Western and Eastern Europe, was a continuation.

3, KUTTY STREET, MADRAS

A few days before Christmas you could ad in the *Hindu* one of the big daily newsıpers in India: *Kutty Street in the Nungamkkam neighbourhood is like many other rts of Madras, slums, open drains and mositos. And you would certainly not expect mebody well-known to choose this street to e in, even if only for a few weeks. Neverthess, it is there, in No. 43, that Brother Roger is. e has come to Madras at the invitation of the atholic Church and of the Church of South dia. And he seems happy to be there, "We e not here for a mission," he says, "but to are the life of the poor."*

The bonds formed in this neighbourhood re so strong that on arriving in Barcelona, rother Roger said to the young people, *"Yesrday afternoon, it was almost impossible to ve the poorest people of the neighbourhood Madras where we were living. The people of e shacks in our street had become our family. ie expressions of the women, men and chilen were poignant. There was such expectation their faces. They did not want us to leave. eir love was fire.*

We were living in a little two-roomed dwelg against which leant two shacks. On Deember 13th part of their matted palm roofs re swept off by a storm. In one of these huts ere was the young father of a family stretched t, seriously ill, sheltered by the bit of roof left.

On December 24th, Christmas Eve, with r neighbours in mind, I said to myself, when e human family is plunged into big tensions, ien miserable poverty is side by side with imense personal wealth, and when the populan of some countries is increasing, as in India 20 million each year, it is enough to make u search passionately. And I was wondering, far as we are concerned, what risks can be ken with a view to sharing between the five ntinents? And so two projects which had ver before come to mind were worked out: t of creating a Gandhi Prize and that of prering an intercontinental council for sharing."

HE WELCOME AT MADRAS

On December 27 at 5 am, the neighbourod of Nungambakkam saw an incredible ovement of people which was leading across large avenue of Sterling Road beside which there are slums, to the door of the Jesuit University which welcomed this chaos with great generosity. Most of the young people came from all over India, even the most distant parts, (Assam, Shillon, on the border with China and Burma. But about a thousand others came from 20 countries in Asia and most of the countries of Europe. There were also a few from other continents.

The colourful crowd, disovering their diversity with amazement, were sent out in the whole city and Madras really offered the best of what she had: openness of heart and the grace of sharing. Most of the young people were welcomed into families who gave the most gracious attention to their visitors: adding a little fish to the rice, buying a new plate or goblet for the guest. So as not to be a load on the family hosting them, the young people brought back to them portions of cooked rice which was distributed at the meeting place, wrapped in a banana leaf.

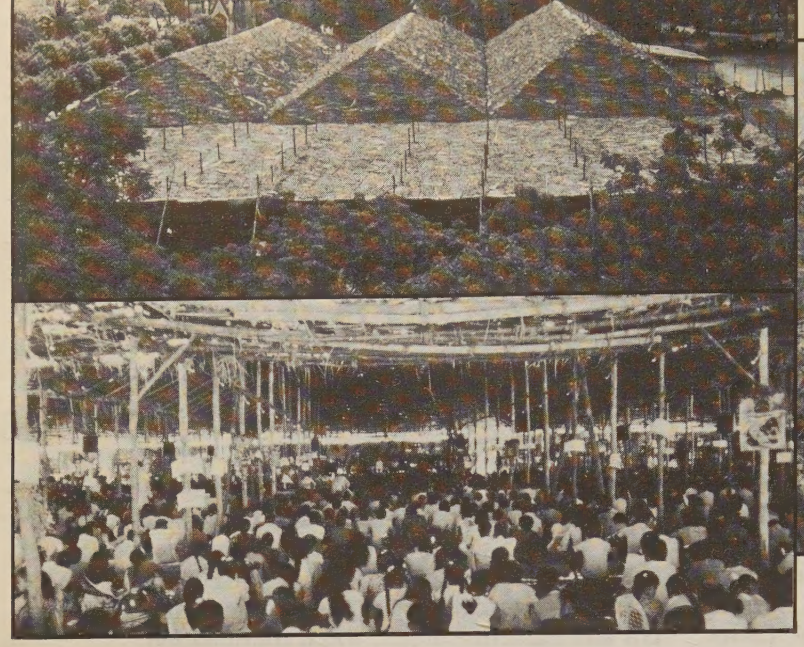
Every group in Madras prepared themselves for this welcome with generosity and seriousness. One of these groups had started by reflecting for a long time just on the meaning of welcoming a guest, and besides, a foreigner. Their neighbourhood, Sastri-Nagar is very poor, its population of Tamil origin have been through several exiles, the last time having been driven out of Burma. Bit by bit they had discovered that it was important to simply welcome the foreigners as if they were Indians, letting them learn, albeit clumsily, to eat with the right hand, to sit and to sleep on the ground on mats, etc. These would be the best conditions for a real meeting. And as many of the houses of the neighbourhood are very poor, they had the idea of building a shelter together, over which they stretched fabric. The families were thinking about welcoming the foreigners for meals.

BAMBOO CATHEDRAL

Each morning the pilgrims converged, from all the suburbs of this large city of over three and a half millions, onto the university of Nungambakkam, which is surrounded by a vast area of fields and trees.

There they spent the daytime, which was especially marked by the two periods of common prayer-an hour and a half each time. As there is not a cathedral big enough to fit so many people in Madras, an enormous "pandal" was prepared, a sort of temporary construction of bamboo and matted coconut leaves, which is usually erected in front of a house for a wedding feast or a traditional festival in India. It was splendidly decorated: great quantities of oil lamps and vigil lights, blossoms and pottery surrounding an icon of the cross, always draped with fresh garlands of flowers, and in front there were sticks of burning incense. This was the sacred space of the meeting, a place of silence filled with the echoes of an extremely noisy city. ▷

IN KUTTY STREET



THE BAMBOO CATHEDRAL

It was in this temporary cathedral that the two common prayers of the day took place. During the first chant, a child or a young girl dressed in a sari would go to light the Indian lamp, symbol of the light of God which is lit each day in the human heart. The Taizé canons and litanies alternated harmoniously with Indian melodies, traditional bhajans which, like the Taizé chants consist of simple phrases and are repeated at length.

STRUGGLE AND CONTEMPLATION

The crowd sank into prayer while the noise of the city never ceased. The silence penetrated each person to their depths and it contributed to the seriousness of the times of sharing in little groups on themes like: "How can we break with all sorts of fatalism or passiveness when faced with divisions of all kinds?" -"What risks can we take to make the earth a place to live in, concretely, in my present surrounding?" - "How can we live from Christ's forgiveness and even go as far as giving our lives?" There was the discovery that some words like "liberation" or "freedom" had not at all the same meaning from one continent to another, but that for all, a same ideal and a same search were called for, with both struggle and contemplation.

Such an experience made a lot of prejudices drop, in particular in the relationships between young people of the cities and young people from the country, between different Christian denominations, Indians and Westerners...At the end of the International Youth Year, it was also an extraordinary sign of the vitality of the Churches of Asia, despite all their difficulties.

AT THE HEART OF THE REALITY OF INDIA

This meeting was the first meeting of this type to take place in Asia. And India, despite a remarkable economic and technical development remains a country of poverty. Therefore it was wanted for this meeting in the Southern hemisphere first of all to concretize sharing with the poor. A few young people who arrived beforehand were able to touch this reality of India in a deeper way by being received for a few days in the villages around Madras or in Kerala.

THE GANDHI PRIZE

On the last evening of the meeting, there was a moment which the participants can never forget. Brother Roger was with twenty children of the area where he had been living for three weeks. Around the children were one or two young people from each of the forty-five nationalities represented. It was the inauguration of the Gandhi Prize, which was applauded at length. The forty-five young Poles present in Madras were going to be able to bring back to the country the good news of the prize being awarded to Aniela Urbanowicz of Warsaw: a 87 year old woman whose husband and daughter died in a concentration camp during World War II and who to this day keeps alive in many people a fine human hope.

IN BARCELONA

The two places of prayer where all the participants gathered midday and evening in Barcelona were only 200 metres from one another: the street linking them filled up at the times of meal distribution. What was there in common between Santa Maria del Mar, beautiful church of the city, and the former vegetable market, el Born, where nothing could stop the draughts? But, in both places it was the same prayer, which continued a very long time in the evenings, around the cross.

For all their diversity, the different neighbourhoods of Barcelona and neighbouring cities participated in the same adventure. In the preparation, the emphasis had been placed on meeting people who we do not know, openness towards others and visits to those who are committed to the very poor. The families in particular responded well to this appeal, seeing as they welcomed three quarters of the participants in their homes and nearly all to the festive meal of New Year's Day.

EASTER AND COMING MEETINGS AT TAIZE

EASTER MEETING AT TAIZE: March 23-30, 1986, also possible to arrive on Thurs 27th, Fri 28th or Sat 29th March.

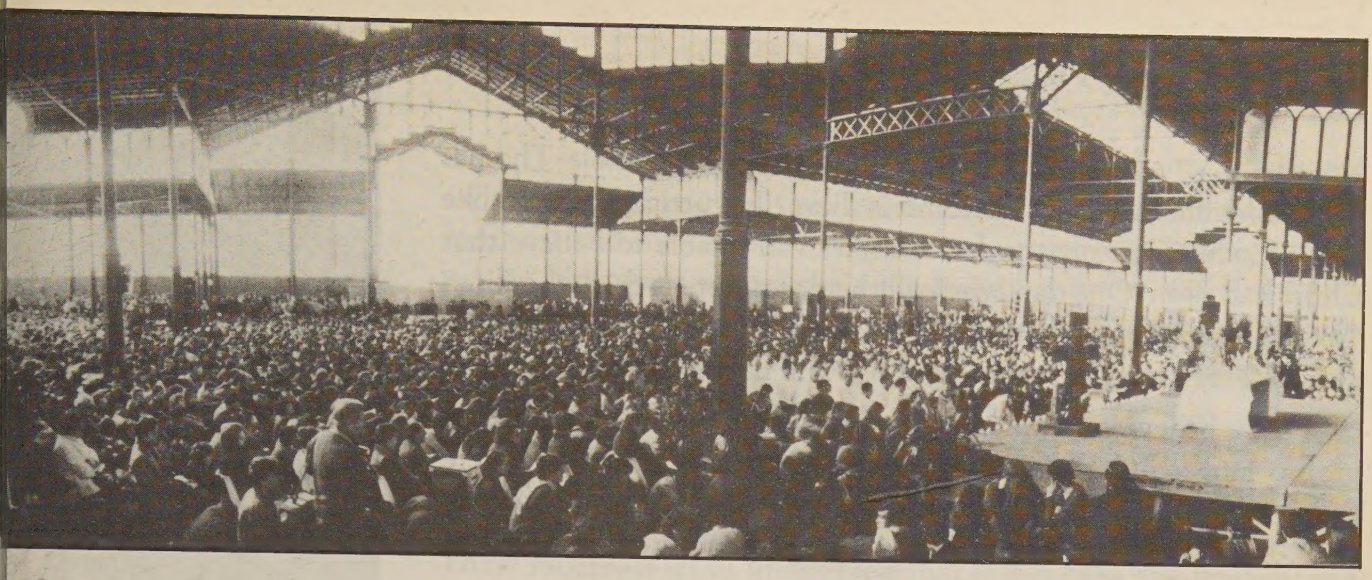
For young adults from 17 to 30 years old, Week-long meetings all year round. Each week the meetings begin on Sunday afternoon and last through to the following Sunday at midday (leave after the morning Eucharist). It is also possible, if necessary, to come just for a weekend (from Thursday evening or Friday midday to Sunday midday).

The meetings include, bible introductions given by a brother, sharing in small groups, time to reflect in silence. And to each small group a task is entrusted: e.g. serving meals, washing-up, etc. Those who wish may opt for a group that involves rather more manual work. It is also possible to choose to spend the week in silence: to see one's life in the light of the Gospel, with a daily bible meditation. For many young people, staying for a second week (perhaps in silence) to deepen their search proves to be a worthwhile experience. Those who wish to do this should speak with a brother during the course of their first week. Those who want to consider an even longer stay must write beforehand.

Young people 15 or 16 years old can come for these meetings: Weekends: Feb. 28-March 2, 27-31 (Easter), May 1-4, 8-11 (Ascension), June 13-15, Sept. 19-21, Oct. 24-26, 31-Nov. 2 (All Saints), 2-5, 6-9. Weeks: May 25-June 1, July 6-13, 13-20, August 25-31, Sept. 1-7.

Adults over 30 years are welcome for periods of one week, particularly between Easter and early November. Arrive Sunday afternoon; depart the next Sunday, from 11.15am on. (Also possible to come just for a weekend: Friday afternoon to Sunday). Because of limited space, please write in advance and wait for reply.

Parents with children: from March 23 to April 6, and from late June to early September each week, families form a group together. Arrive Sunday and leave following Sunday.



▲ ▲ SHARING FROM ONE CONTINENT TO ANOTHER ▲ PRAYER IN THE BARCELONA MARKET

THE SAME PATH

Those who were welcoming had no doubt lot to do, but the common prayer helped to ive true meaning to the enormous task of or- anisation. This is how one of them describes ; "This last while, doubt was growing with atigue and with the obstacles we faced but uring the meeting, the joy of being able to nare and to discover the communion of prayer nd song lead me on to recognising an infinite nterior life. I who thought I was alone and ho was looking for support, saw these young eople arriving in their thousands, on the same ath and with the simplicity of those who are iving their trust. The second evening, in Santa laria del Mar, at the end of the common rayer, without too much knowing why, I de- ided to go near to the cross and the doubt hich was accompanying me disappeared. It as the strength of the love of God which was lling me, I have nothing to give him, and he ives me everything!"

Somebody from the centre of Barcelona peaking about the exchanges in the morning their parish: "The preparation, with its eetings and prayer together made it possible or me to live those days very deeply. Not only getting to know the parish better (I had lost ntact with it), but above all in providing the ght conditions for the formation of a group ho want to share their faith together. Each eek we are going to pray together, even if we are only a few. Here it is very rare that we are able to talk about our experiences of prayer and faith, whether personally or together.

REFLECTION INTO ACTION

It was largely the visits to places of hope in the neighbourhood where people involved in different ways helped to give the reflection a basis in real situations. Some people also chose to visit places where suffering dominates. How can hope be discovered there too? Two of them wrote this after their visit to the juvenile prison: "We tried to explain to them what we were in the middle of experiencing of trust and prayer with people from all over Europe. They were above all surprised that families opened their doors and welcomed with such trust. Their question was, "If it were us, would we be welcome?" At the end we spent some time in prayer together, someone who had robbed a bank, another who had beaten up his boss, everybody. We were surprised to discover that the Bible readings touched many of them and that they joined in with the chants. We have no real answer to all the questions that this visit raises for us, but anyway we were happy to be with them."

Throughout the meeting, the Catalans showed their gift for making the days a festival, being joyful in welcoming others, joyful to be underway together. All this is already stimulating a lot of initiatives to allow a continuity in Barcelona which tallies well with what Brother Roger said on the final day: "Those among the Spanish who know what facing difficult realities means are numerous. They don't float between heaven and earth. They have acquired the hard way the maturity which could make them bearers of trust in the whole human family."

AN INTERCONTINENTAL COUNCIL FOR SHARING

At the end of the meeting in Barcelona, Brother Roger announced the formation of an intercontinental council for sharing in Autumn 1987 which will not be a new fund-raiser, but which will gather suggestions for the stimulation of a wide sharing between the continents, both material and cultural. ☐

ccommodation: In tents or in dormitories (boys and rls separate). Bring sleeping-bag and lightweight or flatable mattress. If possible, a tent.
ost: Since the currencies of different countries vary value, the amount people contribute for their stay aries. Suggested price (1986) per day for young eople under thirty (GB and Scand.): 22 to 29 French ancs; (IRL): 19 to 25 Francs; (USA): 29 to 36 Francs. nd for adults: 50 to 88 Francs. Please pay on arrival nd in Francs (Cash or Travellers' Cheques). N.B. ere are no facilities at Taizé for changing money, so hange money before you come.
is useful to bring a Bible.
irect Coach Service to Taizé from Britain and Ire- nd: FRANK HARRIS COACHES Ltd, Manor Road, est Thurrock, GRAYS, Essex RM16 1EH. el:Purfleet (0708) 864911, Telex: 893322.

Send this form to: Meetings, Taizé Community, 71250 CLUNY, FRANCE.

NAME :

FIRST NAME :

ADDRESS :

(with post code and country)

Telephone :.....

Occupation : ..... Age : .....

Will participate in the meeting from ..... to .....

Will bring my own tent : yes / no. If you are driving to Taizé, please tick : car ☐ mini-bus ☐

I have already been to Taizé : no / yes (date of last visit : .....)

Please send ..... additional registration forms.

Do you know that the disciple Thomas died in Madras and that his tomb is there? His attitude was so like that of many Christians today. Thomas was unable to believe that Christ had risen. One day, when all the doors were locked, the Risen Christ stood before him, and said to Thomas, "You believe because you have seen me, but happy are those who believe without seeing."

If we believe only what we see or what we can feel of God, we are no longer living that simple trust in God. It is as if we were trying to go to God without putting our trust in the Mystery of faith. Even when we cannot feel anything, the mysterious presence of the Risen Christ remains within us.

Four centuries after Christ, Saint Augustine himself, after having found the faith, wrote, "Too late did I love you and yet you were within me, it is I who was outside, who was not with you." Thus Christ was present in Augustine even when he was not a believer.

in Barcelona

This evening's Gospel (John 6, 66-69) tells us that certain people who apparently had understood Christ Jesus began to leave him. They went away like today many people are going away from the mysterious communion of his body which is the Church. Today, Christ is abandoned in that way. Jesus asked them this question: "Are you too going to leave me and go away?" But Peter, the apostle answers Jesus: "To whom shall we go? You bring us an answer from eternity for our entire life."

Peter understood that to experiment with Christ is to run the risk of completely misunderstanding the Gospel. Why is that? The reason is that Christ Jesus brings an answer that is so vital that it cannot be "tried out" for a limited time only. Yes, for all of us to be built up in God we need to give our trust not for a limited time only, but to the very end, that is throughout our life, for the whole of our existence on earth.

Each one of us wants to find fulfilment. But to seek fulfilment for oneself only without those that God entrusts to us in the course of our lives, leads to a fundamental egoism. In the Gospel, to find fulfilment is always to create with Christ Jesus, to create with God for oneself and for others. The more a human being seeks communion with God, the more he becomes what he is in his depths. Yes, human beings find fulfilment only in the presence of God.

in Madras

Some extracts from Brothe meetings could be used by the intercontinental meeti

Yo you that, throughout life, f ables us to go forward again At certain times, we underst to associate us to a creatic myself, "You wish to look t the Mystery of faith. And t we be, whether at work, on see me, fragile and vulnera mysterious presence."

It is true that for all h ourselves, "but where is th repeat this: Christ is there f mental for the Gospel. In which can only be a simple can receive it. Yes, all. But s that agnostics and non-beli grasp where our source is. A writes, in the same way as sential: it is not we who hav first.

Already in the first cen go forward in faith, not wit ing forward, without needin ness, we are advancing, w Christ.

neditations during the two ing to prepare inwardly for

. I am an old man. I can tell s an inner attitude that en-

d gives us an inventive spirit . For my own part, I say to prepare yourself to trust in us to say to Christ, wherever at home or in church, "You uch want to live from your

re are days when we say to d?" And so, I would like to ut exception: that is funda- n God deposits faith, faith d, a trust so simple that all en complicate faith so much tand nothing. They do not erson who neither reads nor ucated, understands the es- l, but God who has loved us

ostle Paul could write: "We ". Yes, all of us, we are mov- . Even when we are in dark- mmobile, we are following

in Madras

In the last while I have often been asked to say something about the yes which commits our whole life because of Christ and the Gospel. It is good to know that in each of us this yes for life comes up against a no. It is because we are afraid of a choice which will demand losing other possibilities which are often very attractive. We are all like that, always wanting to have everything.

Sometimes when faced with this yes which involves our whole life with God we have the impression that there is something like an inner emptiness in us, as if we were setting off from nothing. These moments let us understand that it is in calm and trust in God that we commit our lives.

A yes to the call to celibacy for Christ or the yes of faithfulness in marriage contains such an absolute of the Gospel that we often see ourselves as lacking what is necessary. But God never leaves us helpless, the realities of God are in us. The first beatitude of Jesus is for everyone, happy are the simple-hearted, the realities of God are within them.

in Barcelona

To fulfill ourselves in God, we need to be accompanied. In that mystery of communion which is the Church, Christ tears us away from isolation. There he gives us for our entire life a foundation for a reality that is both mystical and visible. There he communicates his Holy Spirit to us. And he accompanies us in a visible way through believers: women, men and young people. He accompanies us also through those who have a ministry in that communion which is the Church.

Once you have returned home, you will be asked to create with God a commitment for your whole life. But why, when we would so much like God to be everything in our life, do we encounter resistances within ourselves and also from others?

The Gospel then speaks to us in absolute terms. Through it we glimpse that to live from the Spirit of the Risen Christ means to surrender oneself, to give oneself. These words "abandon yourself, give yourself" can can become a prayer that can be said at all times in the silence of our hearts, when we are working or when we are speaking with others. And Christ replies: a good measure, pressed down, shaken and overflowing will be poured into your heart. Yes, with upheavals and trials, but at the same time an abundant measure. So surrender yourself, give yourself to God.

in Barcelona

April

These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the underlined one is suggested. The reference in italics shows the source of the short reading.

Tue 1 God has rescued us from the ruling force of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son that he loves, and in him we enjoy our freedom, the forgiveness of sin.
Acts 2.36-41 ● *Colossians 1.9-14* ● John 20.11-18

Wed 2 Christ is the head of the Body, that is, the Church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, for God wanted all fulness to dwell in him.
Ac 3.1-10 ● *Col 1.15-20* ● Matthew 4.12-17

Thu 3 Paul wrote: Persevere in faith, standing firm on the solid base of the faith, never letting yourselves drift away from the hope promised by the Gospel.
Ac 3.13-15,17-21 ● *Col 1.21-23* ● Mt 4.18-25

Fri 4 Jesus said: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, they will be shown mercy.
Ac 4.7-12 ● Col 1.24-29 ● *Mt 5.1-12*

Sat 5 Jesus said to his disciples: You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, what can make it salty again ?
Ac 4.13-22 ● *Mt 5.13-16*

SUN 6 Jesus said to Thomas: You believe because you can see me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.
Ac 5.12-16 ● Revelation 1.9-19 ● *Jn 20.24-31*

Mon 7 Jesus said: If you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering.
Jeremiah 31.23-25 ● Col 2.1-5 ● *Mt 5.17-20,23-24*

Tue 8 Live your lives in Christ Jesus. Be rooted in him and built up on him, held firm by the faith you have been taught, and overflowing with thanksgiving.
Jer 31.31-34 ● *Col 2.6-10* ● Mt 5.33-42

Wed 9 The Lord says: They will be my people and I shall be their God. I will not cease to do good to them. I will fill they hearts with faithfulness towards me, so that they will never turn away from me again.
Jer 32.38-41 ● Col 2.12-14 ● Mt 5.43-48

Thu 10 The Risen Christ said to the disciples: Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.
Jer 33.2-3,6-8 ● Col 2.16-23 ● *Jn 20.19-23*

Fri 11 You have put on a new self which is being renewed in the image of its Creator. Here there can be no room for distinction between persons ; there is only Christ, who is all and in all.
Jer 33.14-16 ● *Col 3.8-11* ● Mt 6.1-6

Sat 12 Jesus said: Some think that by using many words in their prayer, they will make themselves heard. Do not be like them ; your Father knows what you need before you ask him.
Ezekiel 1.28-2.5 ● *Mt 6.7-15*

SUN 13 Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me ?" Peter replied, "Lord, you know everything ; you know I love you. "
Ac 5.27-32,40-41 ● Rev 5.11-14 ● *Jn 21.1-19*

Mon 14 May the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together in one body.
Ez 3.10-17 ● *Col 3.12-17* ● Mt 6.16-21

Tue 15 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.
Ez 11.17-20 ● *Col 4.2-6* ● Mt 6.22-24

Wed 16 Jesus said: Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these other things will be given you as well.
Ez 16.60-63 ● 2 Corinthians 1.1-6 ● *Mt 6.25-34*

Thu 17 The Lord says: I take no pleasure in the death of anyone. Turn to me and live !
Ez 18.27-32 ● 2 Cor 1.7-11 ● Jn 21.1-14

Fri 18 I myself will give pasture to my sheep, says the Lord. I shall look for the one which is lost, bring back the stray, bandage the injured, strengthen the weak. I shall watch over the fat and healthy. I shall be a true shepherd to them.
Ez 34.11-16 ● 2 Cor 1.12-22 ● Jn 21.15-17

Sat 19 Blessed be the Lord, day after day He takes care of us, God our Saviour.
Ps 68 ● Ez 34.23-31 ● Jn 21.18-25

SUN 20 Jesus said: The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice ; I know them and they follow me.
Ac 13.43-52 ● Rev 7.9, 14-17 ● *Jn 10.27-30*

Mon 21 Jesus said: Do not judge, and you will not be judged.
Ez 36.22-24 ● 2 Cor 2.14-17 ● *Mt 7.1-5*

Tue 22 The Lord says: I will give you a new heart. I will remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh. I shall put my Spirit in you.
Ez 36.25-28 ● 2 Cor 3.1-8 ● Mt 7.7-12

Wed 23 Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
Ez 37.1-10 ● *2 Cor 3.16-18* ● Luke 24.1-12

Thu 24 The Lord says: You will know that I am the Lord when I open your graves and make you rise up from them.
Ez 37.11-14 ● 2 Cor 4.1-5 ● Lk 24.36-49

Fri 25 ST MARK
Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God gives his grace to the humble.
1 Peter 5.5b-14 ● Mark 16.15-20

Sat 26 The path of the upright is like the light of dawn, whose brightness increases till full daylight.
Proverbs 4.18 ● Ez 37.23-28 ● Mt 7.15-20

SUN 27 Jesus said: Love one another just as I have loved you. By this, everyone will recognize you as my disciples.
Ac 14.21-27 ● Rev 21.1-5 ● *Jn 13.31-35*

Mon 28 Jesus said: It is not anyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father.
Ez 47.1-12 ● 2 Cor 4.6-12 ● *Mt 7.21-29*

Tue 29 We fix our eyes not on what is seen but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
Daniel 2.20-22 ● *2 Cor 4.13-18* ● Mt 8.1-13

Wed 30 We live by faith, not by sight.
Dn 3.23-26,46-50 ● *2 Cor 5.1-7* ● Mt 8.14-22

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5 to 7)

In the Sermon on the Mount, St. Matthew has gathered together many sayings of Jesus. Here we find the most developed teaching of Jesus, his relationship to all that God had asked of his people in the Old Testament, what it called the Law, and his own expectations of his disciples.

If we want to avoid making it a crushing text or one reserved just for an elite, we have to remember throughout the Sermon on the Mount the lightness which marks its opening and that is communicated by the repetition of the word "Blessed". By the gift of God, the disciples are: the people of the beatitudes, the light of the world, the salt of the earth (Matthew 5. 1-16).

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus defines his relationship to the Law. On Sinai God made his will known and instructed his people whom he had freed by showing them the way to true liberty. But in Jesus' time the Law was no longer seen as the loving instruction God had given to his people. The Law was followed, but in a climate of disunity. By Jesus' presence among mankind (Mt 5.1), by the gift of a new, unified and reconciled heart, the will of God can now be accomplished in the world (Mt 5.17). The people will be able to reflect him on earth (Mt 5.48).

Even though Jesus' expectations of his disciples are straightforward, they never form a programme in which everything has been said and which dispenses with thinking, being creative, understanding the present and discerning the suitable way to act. On the contrary, the Sermon on the Mount is a tremendous appeal to human imagination, to our creative abilities and to all our resources for loving and forgiving. This comes out clearly in the conclusion about Jesus' relationship to the Law: "So always treat others as you would like them to treat you ; that is the meaning of the Law and the Prophets" (Mt 7.12).

May

Thu 1 Christ died for all, that those who live should live not any more for themselves, but for him who died and was raised to life.
Daniel 3.51-52,85-89 ● *2 Cor 5.11-15* ● Matthew 28.1-8

Fri 2 God has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation.
Dn 6.27b-28 ● *2 Cor 5.16-21* ● Mt 28.9-15

Sat 3 Jesus, risen from the dead, said to his disciples, "See, I am with you always ; yes, to the end of time."
Dn 7.13-14 ● *Mt 28.16-20*

SUN 4 Jesus said: The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you.
Acts 15.1-2,22-29 ● Rev 21.10-14,22-23 ● *John 14.23-29*

Mon 5 Paul wrote: We are considered sorrowful, we who are always rejoicing ; we are thought of as poor and yet we possess everything.
Dn 9.17-19 ● *2 Cor 6.1-10* ● Mt 9.1-8

Tue 6 Paul wrote: We were beset by conflicts on the outside, and by fears within ; but God, who encourages the downcast, consoled us.
Wisdom 1.1-5 ● *2 Cor 7.5-7* ● Mt 9.9-13

Wed 7 God did not make death, he takes no pleasure in the destruction of the living. He created all things for life.
Ws 1.7,12-15 ● 2 Cor 8.1-5 ● Mt 9.14-17

Thu 8 ASCENSION
May God enlighten the eyes of your hearts so that you can see what hope his call holds for you.
Ac 1.1-11 ● *Ephesians 1.17-23* ● Luke 24.46-53

Fri 9 Our Lord Jesus Christ, though he was rich, became poor for your sakes, so that through his poverty you might become rich.
Ws 2.23,3.1-5a ● *2 Cor 8.7-15* ● Mt 9.18-34

Sat 10 Those who trust in the Lord will understand the truth ; those who are faithful will live with him in love.
Ws 3.5b-9 ● Mt 9.35-38

SUN 11 While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, then out loud he said, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."
Ac 7.55-60 ● Rev 22.12-14,16-17 ● John 17.20-26

Mon 12 Jesus said to Nicodemus: The wind blows where it pleases ; you can hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.
Ws 5.15-16 ● 2 Cor 9.6-10,15 ● *Jn 3.1-8*

Tue 13 Jesus said: In my Father's house there are many rooms.
Ws 6.10-16 ● 2 Cor 11.21-31 ● *Jn 14.1-10a*

Wed 14 The Lord said: My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.
Ws 7.7-10,15-16 ● *2 Cor 12.7-10* ● Jn 14.10b-14

Thu 15 Jesus said: In a short time the world will no longer see me ; but you will see that I live and you will also live.
Ws 7.21-26 ● 2 Cor 13.4-13 ● *Jn 14.15-21*

Fri 16 Jesus said: Anyone who loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make a home in him.
Ws 7.27-8.1 ● 2 Thessalonians 1.1-5 ● *Jn 14.23-26*

Sat 17 Jesus said: Peace I leave with you ; my own peace I give you, a peace which the world cannot give, this is my gift to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.
Ws 8.2,9,21-9.5 ● *Jn 14.27-29*

The Second Letter to the Corinthians

Of all St. Paul's epistles, the 2nd Letter to the Corinthians is written in the most lively style. First of all it contains a description of the sufferings and glory of the apostolic ministry (Ch. 1-7), and then an appeal for a collection (Ch. 8-9), and finally an answer to the accusations made of Paul (Ch. 10-13).

To explain his ministry, the apostle speaks of his unity with Christ. All his trials are the sufferings of Christ ; his joy is the life of the Risen Lord in him (1.5 ; 4.10-11). For "everything comes from God" (5.18), and from Christ who is the "image" (4.4) "the Yes" (1.19-20) of God. Thus at the very moment where Paul is persecuted, from outside as from within, his "joy is overflowing" (7.4-5). For he sees the whole world in the light of the reconciliation already accomplished by Christ, he "no longer judges anyone by the standards of the flesh", that is, by a purely human judgement (5.14-19). It is not his intention to be a "master in the faith" in the manner of the "letter which kills", but "working for the happiness" of the believers, the joy of the Spirit which transfigures in the image of the Lord (1.24 and 3.18).

The collection, a link between Christians already separated by large distances (Ch. 8-9), is probably the first such large-scale scheme of sharing in history. It is founded on gratitude for the "inexpressible gift" of God (9.15) and of Christ who has "made us rich by his poverty" (8.9). The sign of the gift is joy (8.2 ; 9.7).

Even though he faces accusations (Ch 10-13), the apostle stays passionately attached to those whom he has led to Christ. He uses all the means of persuasion in order not to abandon them to impressive so-called apostles, but who are only trying to draw people to themselves (11.5,13 ; 12.11). But Saint Paul does not try to win them by force: "We are only too glad to be weak provided you are strong" (13.9). The Lord said to him: "My grace is enough for you, my power is at its best in weakness," (12.9).

SUN 18 PENTECOST
The body is a unity, although is has many parts, and so it is with Christ: we were all baptized into one body in a single Spirit.
Ac 2.1-11 ● *1 Cor 12.3-7,12-13* ● Jn 20.19-23a

Mon 19 Who could ever have known your will, Lord, had you not given Wisdom and sent your Holy Spirit from above ? In this way people have been taught what pleases you.
Ws 9.11-18 ● Ac 2.14-21 ● Jn 15.26-16.4

Tue 20 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will lead you to the complete truth, for he will not speak of his own accord, but will say only what he has heard.
Ws 11.22-12.2 ● Ac 2.29-36 ● *Jn 16.5-15*

Wed 21 Jesus said to his disciples: Now you are sad ; but I shall see you again, and your hearts will be full of joy, and that joy no-one shall take from you.
Isaiah 32.15-20 ● Ac 4.32-35 ● *Jn 16.16-23a*

Thu 22 Jesus said: The Father himself loves you, because you love me. I came from the Father and have come into the world. Now I am leaving the world to go to the Father.
Is 44.1-4 ● Ac 5.27-32 ● *Jn 16.23b-33*

Fri 23 Jesus sent out the twelve, saying, "Proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is close at hand. You have received without charge, give without charge."
Exodus 3.1-6 ● Ac 5.34-42 ● *Mt 10.1-10*

Sat 24 Jesus said, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves ; so be as shrewd as snakes and yet innocent as doves."
Ex 3.7-12 ● *Mt 10.11-20*

SUN 25 We have a hope that will not let us down, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.
Proverbs 8.22-31 ● *Romans 5.1-5* ● Jn 16.12-15

Mon 26 Paul wrote: We pray that God will, by his power, fulfill all your desires for goodness and complete all that you have been doing through faith.
Ex 3.13-14 ● *2 Th 1.11-2.3a* ● Mt 10.22-27

Tue 27 May our Lord Jesus Christ, and God our Father who has given us his love and, through his grace, such ceaseless encouragement and sure hope, encourage and strengthen you in every good word and deed.
Ex 4.10-15 ● *2 Th 2.13-17* ● Mt 10.28-32

Wed 28 Jesus said: Anyone who finds his life will lose it ; and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.
Ex 6.5-9 ● 2 Th 3.1-5 ● *Mt 10.37-42*

Thu 29 Jesus said: I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.
Ex 13.17-22 ● *Jn 6.45-51* ● Mt 11.1-6

Fri 30 Moses said to the people: Do not be afraid ! Stand firm and you will see what the Lord will do to rescue you.
Ex 14.11-14 ● James 1.1-6 ● Mt 11.7-15

Sat 31 Never, when you are being put to the test, say, "God is tempting me" ; God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he put anyone to the test.
Ex 15.1-2,13 ● *Jm 1.12-17* ● Mt 11.16-19,25-26

Some reflections shared in Madras :

HAITI :

The young people of Haiti would like to share with all of you in Madras both their misery and heart-felt hope for the future. Many come from families broken by the sickness, death or departure of one of them. Living in the fear of unemployment and often discouraged by their country's economic situation, the young have little opportunity to develop their full potential. They love life and they want to live as women and men who are happy, fulfilled, and free. And in this situation a simple word of hope touches us deeply.

The true pilgrim is someone who accepts simplifying everything in his life to make it possible to walk without hindrance. If he is loaded down, the road will be too hard. Everyone of us is sent as an apostle towards the lonely and those in despair. To set out on pilgrimage far away from home is already a sign of enormous trust in others.

"East and West flowed into one at Madras": The welcome in a suburban parish.

MADRAS :

Some young Indians write:

It was marvelous to see on the early morning of the 27th, hundreds and thousands of young people arriving from all over the globe. Just like the Ganges and the Yamuna merge at the Confluence of Agra, the East and the West were merging as one at Madras. Thousands of young people from different corners of the world being hosted in hundreds of houses and communities for about eight days-this was just wonderful. Is there a better parable for sharing? It was magnificent to see European girls wearing Indian sarees and the cultural interaction that took place in Madras. The impact of this meeting on the Indian youth and our church leaders is really amazing. The prayer was the most beautiful part. Now for the first time, a meeting where people are not classified according to their denominations. We know it is possible to work together and do something to dispel the darkness. (Abraham)

Praying with thousands of youth from all over, I really felt peace and trust and the presence of God. Personally during the meeting I was changing. I began to develop a broader outlook and most important I felt the presence of God in everyone I met. (Mary Agnes)

The meeting was not like any other public meeting. No big speeches were given, but beautiful meditations. It was a wonderful occasion to come together, forgiving the barriers all the barriers of colour, caste and creed. Hosting foreign youth in families of Madras and the villages was new for us. (Francis Xavier)

AUSTRALIA :

"The music of the prayer has touched something deep inside me," one of the Australian aboriginals said after the meeting finished. "How can we do something in our own community where being a Christian means being so rigid and judgmental?"

The welcome given by the Indian people has been overwhelming and beautiful. Some of us have been touched especially by our experience of sharing the lives of the very poor.
In all this there is a new hopefulness and joy: we have met people who are returning to places marked by deep division and mistrust and who seek to be a ferment of trust.

FRANCE :

The most surprising thing about our stay in Madras was the family who lodged us. We communicated at a level beyond words, culture and other distance. The family of nine people lives in two rooms in a well populated and not rich area of Madras. The whole neighbourhood, which is majority Hindu, welcomed us through that Protestant family.

A little example of the type of welcome they gave is: there was just one bed in the house which was used by the grand-parents. They gave it to us during the whole time that we were with them. Some would sleep outside because space was so scarce. We were really amazed by what they offered us.

There was a lot of joy and love in tha family. They considered us as their ow children to the point that on departure da the whole family came with us to the sta tion and the mother left us in tears, saying "I had three daughters, and now I hav five."

One of the many places of hope we vis ited: the Mercy Home, which was a ke moment of our pilgrimage. It is a home fo the dying where misery and joy are on And yet it is hope and joy which dominat These men and women, mentally ill, hand icapped, abandoned spoke to us infinitel with their radiant looks and smiles, whil we would give them a simple Vanakam, th Indian greeting.

Now the journey continues at home her in Rennes, France. We're being invited her there and everywhere to share this happ experience. This journey will lead us t wards new discoveries at home and it w renew bonds which existed already.

Forthcoming stages in the London Pilgrimage...

Monday, 31st March (Bank Holiday) a group will go from BLACKHEATH to PENGE (meeting at 1.00 pm at St Paul's Church, Hamlet Road, SE19 – contact: Ros Birtwhistle 653-2439.

Saturday, April 12th, a group from PENGE to BETHNAL GREEN (meeting at 12.30 in the Parish rooms, St Matthews Church, St Matthews Row, E2 – contact: Jan Welsh 729-0360

Saturday, May 10th, The pilgrimage continues to RAYNES PARK (meeting at St Saviour's Church, Grand Drive, Raynes Park – contact: Mary Barker 540-2950.

Saturday, June 7th, RAYNES PARK goes to SOMERS TOWN – contact: Rosalind Hibbins 267-5049.

Saturday, June 21st, SOMERS TOWN to RICHMOND – contact: Joël Almeida 940-3906.

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